



Editorial

Patient Groups Call on Congress to Fully Fund the Food and Drug Administration

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Twenty leading, national patient organizations have called on key members of the House Senate Appropriations Committee to provide, at a minimum, level funding for the Food and Drug Administration for Fiscal Year 1998.

"The Food and Drug Administration helps patients gain access to important new lifesaving therapies. It is critical that the Agency receive adequate funding so it may sustain and build upon recent achievements," said Don Riggan, President and CEO of the Arthritis Foundation and Chairman of the Board of Directors, National Health Council.

"Equally important, level funding to the Agency is necessary to reauthorize the Prescription Drug User Fee Act for five more years," continued Mr. Riggan. One of the fundamental principles of the Prescription Drug User Fee Act is that the fees are additive and do not supplant the annual Congressional appropriation. Failure to provide at least level funding will automatically trigger an end to user fee payments, which will limit patient access to new therapies in a timely manner.

The Washington based National Health Council does not support the creation of new user fees, on industries not covered by current law, to make up for a reduction in funding to the Agency as called for in the President's budget request. Therefore, it is critical that Congress provide at least level funding to the Food and Drug Administration so it can continue to carry out its many critical public health responsibilities.

The National Health Council is a private, nonprofit umbrella organization of more than 100 health-related organizations nationwide. Its core membership includes over 40 of the nation's leading patient organizations, such as the Arthritis Foundation, American

Cancer Society, Juvenile Diabetes Foundation International and the Alzheimer's Association, Inc.—all groups representing people with chronic diseases and disabilities. Other Council members include the American Medical Association, Biotechnology Industry Organization and private businesses such as Pfizer, Amgen and Cigna.

Thanks to Stephanie Marshall of the National Health Council for this info/editorial.

Commentary

Robert A. Nordyke MD

By George Chaplin
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Robert A. Nordyke MD of Straub Clinic and Hospital

Voltaire said, "Men who are occupied in the restoration of health to other men, by the joint exertion of skill and humanity, are above all the great of the earth. They even partake of divinity, since to preserve and renew is almost as noble as to create."

Many of Hawaii's physicians merit such an encomium, but none more than Dr. Robert Nordyke, now seriously ill.

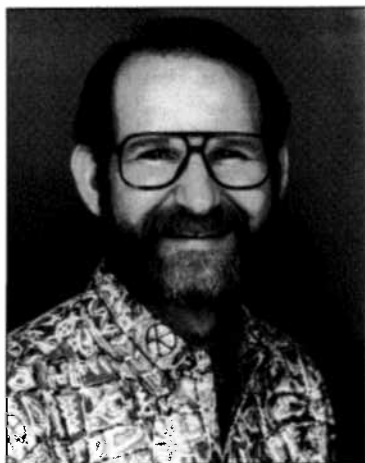
He is well recognized as a pioneer in nuclear medicine, but how many know his background, his formative years that made him into the multi-faceted person that he is?

He arrived 78 years ago in a California farming town, Woodland, in the Sacramento Valley, a town so small the kids could walk to either the elementary or the high school. They had one of each.

It was a time of screened porches and rocking chairs, a time of basic American values. His was a family with little money, but with seven children and lots of love - as well as a tree house that could be reached by climbing out of a second story window and jumping from the roof.

In due course Bob had a broken arm, poison oak and scarlet fever, with a big quarantine sign on the front door and half the family living elsewhere.

A lad with standard gustatory priorities, he used to sneak chocolate powder from a large can high on a kitchen shelf. Ever since, he sneezes every time he eats chocolate—either an allergy or an ongoing sense of guilt.



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